

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
ACDA-12 HA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 DOE-11 SOE-02 DOEE-00
SY-05 MCT-01 /113 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2014
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MOPS, IS, LE
SUBJECT: PRESS FOCUS ON SOUTHERN LEBANON (MARCH 17)

1. SUMMARY: SOUTH LEBANON STORY CONTINUES TO DOMINATE
PRESS; IDF OPERATION IS PRONOUNCED SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED.
PAPERS REPORT GOI INTENTION TO REMAIN IN SOUTH
LEBANON UNTIL SOME OTHER WAY IS FOUND TO KEEP PALESTINIANS
OUT OF AREA. THERE ARE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF
US INTENTIONS, WHAT FORM A SETTLEMENT WOULD TAKE, AND
HOW THE BEGIN-CARTER TALKS WILL BE AFFECTED. SOME
EDITORIALISTS VOICE CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS FOR EGYPTIAN-
ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS, OTHERS DOWNPLAY IT. END SUMMARY.

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2. GRAPHIC AND COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTS OF THE IDF
OPERATION INTO LEBANON FILL FRIDAY PRESS. ONE
CONCLUSION IS CLEAR AND IS TRUMPETED IN MOST HEDLINES:
LEBANESE INCURSION WAS A MILITARY SUCCESS AND LITTLE
REMAINS BUT SCATTERED MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS. THERE IS
ALSO AGREEMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS FIRM IT ITS INTENTION

TO RETAIN IDF FORCES ON THE GROUND UNTIL A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED WHICH WILL SATISFY ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS IN THE NORTH. IN THIS VEIN YEDIOT QUOTES A "HIGH DEFENSE SOURCE:" "WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING SOUTHERN LEBANON --CERTAINLY NOT BEFORE PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S DEPARTURE TO THE US AND WE ASSUME THAT WE WILL ALSO NOT LEAVE THERE FOR A LONG TIME AFTER HIS VISIT."

3. THERE IS LITTLE AGREEMENT REGARDING THE ATTITUDE AND EXPECTED INITIATIVES OF THE US, THE IMPACT OF THIS WEEK'S EVENTS ON THE PEACE PROCESS, AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE BEGIN-CARTER MEETING. WHILE MAARIV REPORTS THAT THE US WILL DEMAND AN UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL BY THE IDF, YEDIOT INTERPRETS HODDING CARTER'S REMARKS TO MEAN THAT THE US WILL NOT PRESSURE ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW UNTIL A SETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS REACHED WHICH IS SATISFACTORY FROM THE ISRAELI STANDPOINT. ZIMUKI AND KIVITI, ALSO OF YEDIOT PREDICT THAT THE US WILL NOT CONDEMN ISRAEL IN THE UN BUT MAY SUPPORT A RESOLUTION DEMANDING ITS IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL. MUCH IS MADE OF THE FACT THAT THE SPOKESMAN USED THE TERM "EXPECTS" RATHER THAN "DEMANDS" ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION STRESSED THAT ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS MUST BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN RESOLVING THE SOUTHERN LEBANON PROBLEM. DAVAR AND YEDIOT STRESS THAT THE US AND ISRAEL "SHARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMON GROUND" IN THIS RESPECT AND BARKAI IN DAVAR GOES SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT THIS OPPORTUNITY --IN WHICH THE US AND ISRAEL ARE SPEAKING A COMMON LANGUAGE ADD A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE--SHOULD NOT BE MISSED.

4. THE OUTLINES FOR A SETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON ARE AS YET UNCLEAR, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS A CONSENSUS THAT THE BORDER AREA MUST BE KEPT FREE OF PLO FORCES THE JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL AND BEN PORAT IN YEDIOT HOWEVER, QUESTION THE EFFICACY OF A "SECURITY BELT," AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES IN ACCOMPLISHING A SETTLEMENT ARE SPELLED OUT IN MOST PAPERS. THERE IS ONLY MILD CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL FOLLOW-UP TO ITS MILITARY ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, RUBENSTEIN IN DAVAR NOTES THAT "PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HAS UTTERLY REFUSED TO TAKE ANY STAND WHATEVER ON POLITICAL OBJECTIVES." IN ITS EDITORIAL, DAVAR ASKS WHETHER ISRAEL HAS WEIGHED "THE ADVANTAGES OF A MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE AREA AGAINST THE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF REMAINING INSIDE SOVEREIGN LEBANESE TERRITORY."

5. WHILE DAVAR FORESEES A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN BEGIN AND CARTER OVER SOUTHERN LEBANON, UNLESS ISRAEL BEGINS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THESE POLITICAL FACTORS, HARIF IN MAARIV IS MUCH MORE SANGUINE. HE REASONS THAT BEGIN'S POSITION ON THE EVE OF HIS WASHINGTON TRIP HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED AND PRESUMES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL HAVE LEARNED THE LESSON OF THE WEEK: ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL IS THE BASIC ISSUE IN THE ONGOING PEACE PROCESS, NOT LEGALISTIC QUIBBLING OVER THE DEFINITION OF 242. HE BELIEVES BEGIN WILL BE TOUGHER AND CARTER MORE UNDERSTANDING AS A RESULT OF THIS WEEK'S EVENTS.

6. WHILE SOME EDITORIALS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER A FURTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SLOW-DOWN OF THE PEACE MOMENTUM, OTHER EDITORIALISTS MAINTAIN THAT THE PREVENTION OF TERRORIST ATTACKS SHOULD NOT AFFECT NEGATIVELY NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT. THERE IS NO REASON, AS THE JERUSALEM POST EDITORIALIZES, TO MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. FURTHERMORE, THE US AND EGYPT MUST FINALLY REALIZE THAT "NO PROPOSAL WHICH IMPLIES A FUTURE ROLE FOR THE PLO INTO AREAS CURRENTLY CONTROLLED BY ISRAEL" IS ACCEPTABLE.
VIETS

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